

**NORTHWEST TEMPE COMMUNITY PLAN**  
**FOCUS GROUP – Wednesday March 9, 2005**  
**Westside Multigenerational Building; 715 W. 5<sup>th</sup> Street; Tempe**  
**Meeting Summary Notes**

Meeting Participants: Elizabeth Baker  
Mare Schumacher  
Luis Ferndandez  
Tom Hinchon  
Bill Flowers  
Michelle Sarina  
W. Brad Kincaid  
Robert Stegemoller  
Suzanne Brewer  
Glen Wollenhaupt  
Jeanette Wollenhaupt  
Walter H. Richardson II

The following meeting notes are intended to be a summary of the discussions at the meeting.
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Peggy Fiandaca, President of Partners for Strategic Action, Inc. explained that she was hired by the City of Tempe to work with the neighborhood to complete the Northwest Tempe Community Plan. She thanked everyone for taking time to come to this meeting to discuss issues, concerns, and ideas to improve the neighborhood. She asked how many people attending had been involved in past planning efforts. The majority of people raised their hands. However, there were several residents that were new to the neighborhood planning process. Therefore, Peggy gave a broad overview of past planning efforts and explained the purpose of the community plan.

Peggy explained the difference between the various types of plans that can pertain to neighborhoods and the relationship to the Tempe General Plan 2030. She also described the anticipated schedule for completion of the Northwest Tempe Community Plan.

Peggy explained that the purpose of the focus group is to understand neighborhood issues, concerns, and potential ideas for improvement to the neighborhood. Particularly, the focus group is intended to communicate those issues that should be addressed in the draft plan. Following is a summary of the focus group discussions.

## A. INTRODUCTIONS

All participants were asked to identify what they like about the neighborhood and what things they would like to see changed.

THINGS I LIKE ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD	THINGS I WOULD CHANGE ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD
The cul-de-sac that I live on	No maintenance of rental properties
Diversity – professionals to students	Cars & other junk in backyards
It is better than anything in Mesa	Noise associated with the dairy
Quality of house construction	Turnover of property; impacting the neighborhood's stability
Prices are affordable	Preservation of existing housing
Unique character of housing	Enhancement of housing occurring
Mature trees	Deteriorating of the community core downtown on Broadway
Proximity to everything	Good landowners that have ability to take care of their property
Can bus, bike, transit, or walk everywhere	Power lines need to be buried
Scale of the neighborhood and housing	High speed drivers on roads
Variety of the neighborhood; it is not suburbia with everything looking alike	Air and traffic noise; neighborhood is surrounded by highways and major arterial roadways
Potential of the area is great	Air pollution due to traffic; dust
Houses are changing and the infill housing or development is bringing change	The heat varies depending on where you are in the neighborhood
It is a transient place; this can be an issue with people moving into the area and understanding the rules and regulations; could provide better information about living in a neighborhood for students who live off campus	Lack of landscaping; lack of vegetation and trees compared to the Maple/Ash area
Mix of high transient population with local residents; can be a tricky balance	Disappointed in the 13 <sup>th</sup> Street renovations; opportunities on the western half from Hardy to Priest

Tempe is a clean city	Gililand Middle School is not maintained; trees have been cut and not replaced
Variety in vegetation	Kids that live in the neighborhood are bused and don't go to local school
Within bike riding distance to everything; self-contained community	Height of Vale; not to scale, poor color choice, and it is different from other surrounding buildings
Everything is fine	Stray cats that are nuisance and cause fleas
Ethnic/economic diversity	Community should have more of a say in the architecture and type of buildings that get built in the neighborhood
Hip neighborhood	Better periscope landscaping
Variety within the neighborhood	Smell of the milk plant, particularly at night
Walking distance to ASU	Smell of sewage and not certain where it is coming from
I do not have to spend any time in an automobile	Difference in temperature throughout the neighborhood
Walkability/Bikability of the neighborhood	Railroad tracks – it is unsafe and there have been a number of incidences/derailments
Love being near the university and therefore, I understand that there will be rental properties; need to identify and address specific problems (e.g., unkempt yards)	Slow down the gentrification occurring in the neighborhood
People know each other	Housing prices are rising and need to keep the affordability of the neighborhood
Excellent parks (e.g., Mitchell Park)	More businesses on Broadway and University that cater to the neighborhood (e.g., grocery store)
	Public spaces maintained (i.e., parks)
	Preservation of the historic character
	More parks
	Buildings that fit the “scale” and character of the neighborhood (e.g., Checker Auto Building does not)

## **B. ISSUES THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED**

The participants identified those issues that must be addressed in the development of the Northwest Tempe Community Draft Plan. The group brainstormed a list. The exercise was not intended to reach any consensus on issues but to identify a comprehensive list of issues.

***What are the important things that the Northwest Tempe Community Plan must address?***

- Trees
- Sensitivity to established neighborhood
- Maintain the character, context, and scale of existing buildings
- There is a cynical attitude due to past planning efforts and development efforts by the City of Tempe
- Density within the area
- Gentrification
- Ability to bike
- Dairy control
- Maintain existing housing
- Handle rental properties – 6 people in 3 bedrooms are too many
- Historic preservation
- Economic diversity; range of incomes
- Traffic calming techniques
- More public open space
- Landscaping throughout the neighborhood
- Address airport noise
- Animal control and care
- Use of alley ways (don't want people using alleys for cut through traffic)
- Transit opportunities
- Address development on Broadway Road (seems to be stepchild of Tempe)
- Gililand Middle School issues addressed
- Address unkempt yards
- Attract more desirable businesses; services to the neighborhood (a Trader Joe's)
- Planning for parking
- Sustainable thoughtful planning
- A booklet that outlines the appropriate rules and identifies who to call for assistance

- Landlord responsibility
- Smell of sewage, garbage, and uncontained trash

### **C. ISSUE DISCUSSION**

The participants took some of the items identified that must be addressed and discussed them in more detail. They brainstormed the specific items that should be explored within each of the issue topics.

#### **Public Open Space**

- Maintain the existing open space currently located within the neighborhood
- Public open space is central to the neighborhood and is important to the area
- Public open space provides a “gathering space” for the neighborhood
- Mitchell Park is an excellent example of quality public open space
- The neighborhood needs more parks
- Explore “rails to trails” program
- The schools in the neighborhood do not look like public open space; they are not maintained; and the gates should be open after the kids are out of school so the neighborhood can enjoy the park space
- It is important to connect open space, trails, and parks
- Pedestrian crossing from Hardy to Mitchell Park between University and 13<sup>th</sup> Street or Broadway is important

#### **Landscaping/Trees**

- Landscaping to support the walkability of the neighborhood
- Trees to provide shade
- Mitigates the heat island effect
- Reduces noise and pollution
- Adds to the neighborhood aesthetics and character
- Provides a healthier environment
- Can be used for screening
- Saves water
- It is important to ensure consistency of landscaping and trees throughout the neighborhood

#### **Economic Diversity and Gentrification**

- It is important to preserve the diversity in the neighborhood
- Don’t push people out
- There needs to be a commitment by the city to neighborhood preservation

- Develop and/or promote an affordable housing program to assist young professionals to be able to afford to live in the neighborhood
- Incentives to encourage housing and neighborhood upgrades

### **Environmental Issues**

- Promotion of sustainability philosophy such as “green building” technology and incentives for using less water
- Provide a better interface between commercial and residential developments
- Better buffering between land uses
- Provide a transition of land uses
- Decorative walls, landscaping, or more space could provide an adequate buffer between land uses
- Promotion of alternative transportation modes
- Better dust control in alleys
- Better animal control in the neighborhood
- Education and promotion of xeriscape landscaping
- Reduction in air traffic in the area
- Reduction in vehicle traffic in the area

### **Aesthetics and Design**

- Important that communication improves between businesses and residents to ensure that business listens to residents
- Important that there are rules and regulations for design are developed and made available to the neighborhood and developers
- There should be a balance between rules and encouragement of “neighborhood pride”
- There are many regulations that are not enforced
- It seems that the city is avoiding issues related to implementing aesthetic regulations
- Encouragement of voluntary cooperation in aesthetics and design
- Along 13<sup>th</sup> Street, people should be given an incentive to upgrade
- There should be public investment that will in turn encourage private investment
- Incentive programs for aesthetics and better design should be developed
- Abandoned buildings must be addressed
- Residents should have more input into the city allowing variances; this process should be more user-friendly

### **Transportation**

- Roads are too wide; but they could be enhanced with landscaped medians, particularly along 10<sup>th</sup> Place

- 13<sup>th</sup> Street traffic calming should be extended all the way up to Priest
- Traffic tables are a more effective means of traffic calming
- Speed bumps are not desired
- There should be “intelligent” narrowing of the street; not like on 13<sup>th</sup> Street because there are problems with bicycles – cars doing tight turns impact the bike lane
- The Flash circulator should be extended down to Hardy and service should be expanded throughout the neighborhood
- Better connections to the industrial park
- Buses should be running after midnight because bars are open later and people in wheelchairs or transit dependent need to be able to get around
- Emergency vehicles and fire trucks have a difficult time getting down the narrowed road (due to traffic calming)
- Consider pedestrian only streets particularly during certain times
- Interface between different modes should be carefully considered from a safety standpoint (e.g., bicycles, pedestrians, autos, and transit)
- More bike lanes in the neighborhood; down Beck is an example
- Address the traffic congestion on Broadway Road; it is a parking lot in the evening
- Evening and morning traffic is very intense; as a result traffic diverts into the neighborhood
- Better enforcement of the school zones

#### **D. NEXT STEPS**

Peggy thanked everyone for attending. She said that meeting summary notes will be completed and included on the website. Everyone will be invited to attend a town hall meeting after the DRAFT Plan is completed. The purpose of the town hall will be to review the DRAFT Plan.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.

City Staff Present:	Elizabeth Thomas, City of Tempe Neighborhood Services
Consultant Present:	Peggy Fiandaca, Partners for Strategic Action, Inc.

**NORTHWEST TEMPE COMMUNITY PLAN  
FOCUS GROUP PROCESS 2005  
SUMMARY OF MEETING QUESTIONNAIRE**

Participants were asked to complete the following questionnaire and turn it in before they left. Following is a summary of the responses.

8 questionnaires were received; 12 people attended (excluding staff). The following indicate how many people rated the following.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Group Size	2	2	2	2
Meeting Facilities			3	5
Length of Focus Group			4	3
Facilitator		1	2	4

**What did you like most about the Northwest Tempe Community Plan Focus Group process?**

Sharing ideas with neighbors in community  
Ability to input concerns  
Giving my opinion  
The open discussion  
Open discussion  
Covered a wide range  
Quick and focused  
Good ideas, but nothing too new  
Where are the people who live here!?

**Is there anything that you would have done differently during the Focus Group process?**

No (4 people)  
I would have started with the plan that we developed five years ago!  
Need to quantify – how many of us agree with each statement – otherwise will be challenged at the end  
Get more people here  
It is too flip, too glib

**Should the process continue to be used to educate citizens and receive input from the community?**

Yes. I can't think of a better alternative but this has the feeling of "here we go again," past processes seem not to have had much effect  
Yes. More input necessary  
Yes. Essential to solicit neighbors' input – need more  
Yes (4)  
Yes. This must happen! We already have "the value" to deal with



**What was the most important topic you heard today that the Northwest Tempe Community Plan should address?**

That this will mean something this time

Environment, tree planting, traffic, rental/abandoned/neglected properties

Yards

Too many unrelated people live in one house

All of them

Gentrification and affordable housing

Scale, context, and preservation of schools

Pollution/noise control – dairy

Neighborhood enhancement and preservation

The City of Phoenix has something called the Village Planning Groups or Village Planning Council. It is a group of neighbors that comment on/approves development for their neighborhood. I would like us to do something like that.